

PAPERS READ

BEFORE THE

LANCASTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

MARCH 6, 1908.

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"History herself, as seen in her own workshop."

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A LANCASTRIAN IN THE MEXICAN WAR.

MINUTES OF THE MARCH MEETING.

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VOL. XII. NO. 3.

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LANCASTER, PA.  
REPRINTED FROM THE NEW ERA.  
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BY MARY NAUMAN ROBINSON

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## A LANCASTRIAN IN THE MEXICAN WAR

I have in my possession a number of letters written during the Mexican War by an officer who served through that conflict, a Lancastrian by birth and family, Colonel George Nauman. From these letters I have made such selections as seemed to be of interest to the Society, and they may possibly be of some historical value, as being written on the spot by a man and a soldier who took part in the war:

Camp near Fort Brown, Texas, May 20, 1846.—On account of Col. Pierce's ill health the command of the battalion and Mobile volunteers devolved on me. On the 14th I was placed in command of 132 men, in addition to our two companies, and with this force escorted the train, composed of about 200 wagons, to Gen. Taylor's camp, where we arrived safely on the 16th. I am still in command of this force, but am momentarily expecting to be ordered into the fort to form part of its garrison, or I may be sent over to one of the forts in Matamoras, which town was taken by our troops merely marching into it, the Mexican army having abandoned it on the morning our army crossed the river, which was on the 16th. They appear intimidated. The dragoons and Texan Rangers are in hot pursuit of them in the direction of Monterey. One of our officers, Lieutenant Stevens, was drowned in crossing the river. Our loss in officers has been excessive so far. In coming up, I examined the battle-ground and a stronger position than that chosen by the enemy it

would be difficult to find, but, to them, with what a fatal result! On a part of the field their dead still lie unburied, just as they fell, and, God knows, the spectacle is horrid enough! They have been invited to come and bury their slain, and yet have left most of that for us to do. Heavens! what a vile thing war is!

June 4, 1846.—The Army of Occupation is at present in a state of quiescence. Most of it is concentrated at Fort Brown, Texas, and at Matamoras. Reinforcements continue to arrive almost daily, and we already have enough troops in the field to undertake a march on the City of Mexico. Nor do I believe we should meet with any serious opposition, as report says the whole country is in consternation at our success and preparations. But it would be no easy affair. The distance is 900 miles; much of the country little better than a desert, but little water, and without resources for the support of an army. Yet it is, despite all difficulties, the intention of General Taylor to make a demonstration on that capital, if he can procure the sanction of our government. It should be done before the enthusiasm of our volunteers subsides. The Mexican army is composed of mongrel troops, scarcely one of them, the officers excepted, being a purely white man. If rumor is to be believed, the Republic of Mexico is in a deplorable condition. Four factions divide it; one desiring the maintenance of the republic; a second, a monarchy under a European Prince; a third desires to cover the shoulders of Santa Anna with the royal purple; and the fourth desires annexation to the United States, hoping thereby to find repose and local liberty. I have visited Matamoras several times, to

inspect the place and study the inhabitants. Most of the houses are made of reed, and thatched with the same material, having nothing but the earth for a floor. The streets are quite broad, and cross each other at right angles, but they are abominably filthy. The people are a mixed race, of all sorts of colors, Spaniards and their descendants, French, Germans, Americans, Africans, Indians, etc. Education is at the very lowest ebb, morals there is none, religion is a mere superstition. Thank God, I am not a Mexican!

July 3, 1846.—We are still quietly encamped on the banks of the Rio del Norte, and are daily being re-inforced by volunteers. A visit to the "halls of the Montezumas" may not be so chimerical after all, but before the Mexican Republic is reduced to reason we shall have to beat her in one more battle, which, if it takes place at all, will be somewhere near Monterey.

July 23, 1846.—Almost all the regular force is on its way to Camargo, preparatory to the great expedition to Monterey. Gen. Taylor is much irritated at the delay in obtaining transportation, the odium of which he exclusively throws on the Quartermaster's Department. I fear I shall not participate in the battle at Monterey, as I learn that I am to be left with my own company, and perhaps several other companies, at Matamoras, to guard and protect that city, probably to be placed in command of Fort Paredes. I do not consider myself fortunate in this disposition.

September 29, 1846.—We are relieved from all apprehension about Gen. Taylor and his corps. Our army reached Monterey on the 19th inst. The 20th was passed in making reconnaissances and preparing for battle.

On the 21st Gen. Worth was sent with the Second Brigade to take possession of some heights in rear of Monterey which commanded the place; and Gen. Twiggs, with the First Brigade, on one side, to create a diversion in his favor. The enemy attacked the Second Brigade, and a general engagement ensued. Our troops soon stormed some of the batteries and got possession of the suburbs and some of the streets. The fight was now continued in the town itself from house to house, and street to street, until the 24th, when Gen. Ampudia, who commanded the Mexicans, proposed to capitulate on certain terms. Finally, an armistice was agreed upon. We captured some twenty-five or thirty pieces of ordnance. Our loss has been serious enough, killed and wounded, about 500; the Mexicans about the same. The loss of life would have been much greater had it not rained all the time the two armies were engaged. On the morning of the 25th our army marched into Monterey and took possession of all the fortified positions.

October 7, 1846.—On the 3d I fired a National salute. One was also fired at Fort Brown, on the other side of the river. I commenced at 1 o'clock, and was immediately followed by Fort Brown. These salutes were fired in honor of our glorious victory, but chiefly to convince the Mexicans of the vicinity that we had actually taken Monterey, which they affected to disbelieve. Division order, dated Camargo, September 29, states "that all bodies of armed Mexicans who shall be found in the neighborhood of the Rio Grande or on the route to Monterey will be viewed as acting without authority from their government and treated as outlaws." This

order was issued on account of certain murders perpetrated by Mexicans near Camargo. The people were slow to believe the fall of Monterey. That prince of bragadocios, Don Pedro de Ampudia, the Mexican commander, bellowed so loudly and frequently in his numerous bulletins, "that General Taylor's forces would find their graves at Monterey, and never again drink the waters of the Rio Grande," that he completely succeeded in convincing his countrymen that such would be the fact. Some criticism is made of General Taylor's method of conducting the attack on Monterey, but he has much prudence and determined courage, and he has been successful. On account of sickness, General Twiggs was not in the engagement.

A tent is not the most desirable residence, but I have had no other since I have been in this land. The climate, notwithstanding the excessive heat during much of the day, is exceedingly fine. The nights, particularly when we have a moon, are inexpressibly beautiful. I spend the day in reading, writing and sleeping, and the early part of the night at the Plaza de Armas, where the other officers of the line have their quarters. There we discuss matters and things in general relating to the war. Sometimes my rest is disturbed by an alarm, when I usually feel so indignant, for every one of them is unnecessary, that I feel as if I should like to destroy the whole town of Matamoras, which lies immediately under my guns. At this season we have no rain, nor have I had a single day's illness with ague. But many of the company are down.

November 2, 1846.—I learn from Colonel Belknap, one of the Inspector Generals, that with my company

perhaps as early as the day after tomorrow I am to join the main army. I am told I am to be placed in charge of a siege train or some other battery of heavy guns. This is exactly what I have all along desired, and I trust I shall not be disappointed.

Some time ago the Mexicans captured an important mail on the road between Monterey and Camargo. General Taylor sent to Ampudia in relation to it, stating that he might keep the public despatches, but requesting him to return the private letters. Ampudia replied that it had been sent to Santa Anna, but that the private letters would be returned. This occurred during the armistice, so you see how little this was regarded by the enemy. From this capture Santa Anna learned the intentions of our government, and has, in consequence, sent 8,000 troops to Tampico, for the defense of that place. If ever an army deserved to be beaten for rashness and carelessness ours unquestionably does. My health continues good, but there is much sickness among the troops.

Camargo, November 13, 1846.—I left Fort Paredes on the 3d, and reached this place on the 9th. We came by steamboat. I am here in command of a battalion of two companies, and I understand from Gen. Patterson that my command is to form part of the expedition destined to operate against Tampico from the Gulf.

Since I have been here I have seen a Mexican funeral. It was, according to my notions, exceedingly shocking. The corpse was carried by two men on a kind of bed. Around the head was a wreath of flowers, and a band of them was stretched longitudinally across it. To the garments, which were those in ordinary wear, were attached all kinds of flowers, natural or

artificial. The body, thus tricked out, was taken to the church, where the priest said the office for the dead over it with the most irreverent haste. It was then hurriedly borne to the cemetery, thrown coffinless into a shallow grave, the earth quickly shovelled in and trodden down by the grave-diggers. "Oh, come away," said an officer who was witnessing the ceremony with me, "these people are heathens."

As a rule, soldiers are supposed to be subject only to the usual dangers of war—"the madness of mankind." Under date of December 4 an account is given of the voyage from the mouth of the Rio Grande to Tampico. The sea was very rough, with a southeastern gale blowing. The vessel was perillously insecure, and the troops in great discomfort. However, on the third day they reached Tampico in safety, about two hours before sunset. We were immediately boarded by hosts of the naval officers in the station, who congratulated us on our safe arrival, and expressed extreme wonder at our being sent around in so insecure a vessel. Commodores Conner and Perry said they looked upon me as a hero, and assured me that in my place they would not have gone to sea in so miserable a craft as the steamer *Undine*. Captain Sterrett said there were many brave officers in the navy, but that after such a trip as ours he was willing to concede that the officers of the army were still braver. We are encamped just outside the town. Lieuts. Brannan and Haskin are with me.

Tampico is a beautiful town. The streets are well paved, the houses well built and comfortable, the markets excellent and prices very moderate. As to the people, their sentiments are all unfavorable towards

us. They universally call us "diablos." The other evening, while two or three of us were passing through one of the streets, we overheard a very respectable-looking matron say to her daughters, "Let us go in, the devils are coming." The people say that God has abandoned the town on account of the arrival of so many heretics.

It is probable that General Taylor is moving in this direction. It is manifestly our interest to take Vera Cruz. It also appears certain that Gen. Scott is coming out to take command, and we expect to see him here in a short time. He has many friends and admirers among us. Our force here is about 1,000 men, and we shall soon have an abundance of troops, as Gen. Patterson's division is rapidly organizing to move in this direction. It is supposed that this point will be the base of operations. Taylor has been joined by Gen. Worth. Worth, with his brigade, has taken possession of Saltillo, and many believe that Gen. Taylor will at once push on to attack San Luis de Potosi, which is said to be very strongly fortified, and where it is reported the Mexicans have collected an army of 30,000 men under Santa Anna, who has (January 23, 1847,) been elected to the Presidency of the Mexican Republic, by a majority of only two, and that over a man who is quite unknown to the public. We shall soon have nearly all the regular forces in Mexico concentrated here, and, with the many bands, we have plenty of music. We expect Gen. Scott hourly, as we hear he is at Brazos. He doubtless has some good reason for the delay.

Tampico, Feb. 21, 1847.—Day before yesterday Gen. Scott came among us, and made quite a sensation in this command. He looks very well, but

begins to show the marks of old age. His enormous size greatly amazed the Mexicans, and no wonder, seeing that it would take half a dozen of them to make, in bulk, such a man as he is. He seemed to be in the most exuberant spirits, and had something kind and complimentary to say to everybody. He told me that I "had been his intimate acquaintance a few years ago." Seeing me, immediately after having made this remark, talking to Maj. Turnbull, he came up and asked me what I had been saying. I told him that "I had just been observing that it must be a very troublesome thing to be a great man, from the incessant vexatious demands made on his time and patience." "I suppose," said he, "by calling me a great man you mean that I am six feet four inches tall." "Why, no, sir, not exactly," said I, and we mutually bowed to each other in our very best style. He immediately withdrew, with a very self-satisfied smile on his face. He possesses much ability.

Near Vera Cruz, March 20, 1847.—A more magnificent sight than the landing of our troops it would be hard to conceive. We arrived on the 9th. I am in Gen. Twigg's division. On the morning of the 11th, while moving over one of the sand hills on our route a twenty-four pound ball struck one of our musicians and took off his arm. The ball struck the earth about a yard from me, and covered me with sand, near enough to make me feel very uncomfortable. I was conversing with Gen. Patterson at the time. He was on horseback, and behaved with great coolness. During the 11th and 12th the enemy kept up an incessant fire of large shot and shell at us. There was also considerable skirmishing. By the 13th we had

the town completely encircled on the land side, and on the 14th sent out skirmishers, driving every one within the walls—Vera Cruz being a walled town. They cannot hold out long. They are short of provisions and fuel, and as we have stopped the supply of water by their aqueduct they have only their cisterns to depend upon. We number about 12,000 fighting men. In our division we are very uncomfortable. This is the 20th, and since the 9th, when we left the ships, we have had no change of clothing, no cooking utensils, no tents. In the moving we have had to carry our blankets, provisions, etc., on our backs. What a figure we would cut on Broadway! I am sure we would not be designated "bandbox soldiers!" Bivouacing will do well enough for a few days, but when it runs into weeks, and that, too, minus a scrap of soap or a razor, it becomes singularly unpleasant. Vera Cruz, with its domes and towers, has quite an imposing appearance, and the castle of San Juan de Ulloa, about one-half mile from the city, with its bristling cannon, presents a very formidable appearance. The town stands on a low point of land, which runs into the sea. The "paysanos" are a miserable looking race, some of them living in cabins constructed of cornstalks. The hovel in which I am now writing is the residence of a priest, and certainly not more than three miles distant from one of the most refined cities in Mexico.

March 30, 1847.—On the 22d Gen. Scott sent in his summons for the surrender of Vera Cruz, which was, of course, rejected by Gen. Morales, in terms of much dignity, to the effect that, as he "was charged with the defense of the place, he should do so to

the utmost of his ability." We immediately opened fire from a battery of seven mortars. Firing continued on the 23d, 24th and 25th, both from the land and naval forces. On the 25th, about dark, I arrived in the trenches to take charge of Battery No. 4, consisting of four 24-pounders, and two 8-inch Howitzers. At 1 a. m. we commenced throwing shells. After some firing, a "norther" began blowing with great severity, and the firing was discontinued. Very early in the morning the Governor of the town sent word that he was willing to surrender, and Gens. Worth and Pillow and Col. Totten were appointed a commission to determine the terms of capitulation. The 26th, 27th and 28th were passed in negotiations, and on the morning of the 29th the city and castle passed into our possession. Being in command in the trenches, which ended in the plain before Vera Cruz, I had the finest opportunity possible for witnessing the surrender of the garrison of 5,000 men. Then, with colors flying and music playing, the First Brigade marched into the town. As our flag was displayed it was hailed with salutes, and finally the battery of which I had charge closed the proceedings by firing a national salute. I am told the city was much injured by our shot and shell, and that the chief destruction of life was among the citizens, and they chiefly women and children. It is a horrid thing to fire upon a town.

April 3, 1847.—I am sitting, as I write, on a military commission for the trial of a man for murder. He belongs to the First Artillery, and in a quarrel about liquor, shot one of his companions. It is a most unpleasant business. The commission sits in town, and assembles at 9 a. m. Our

camp is three miles off, so I must walk six miles every day in a boiling sun.

I have been all over Vera Cruz. At least one-third of the city has been utterly ruined by our shells. All the streets were defended and barricaded with traverses made of sand bags, and the ground round the walls full of conical holes with sharp spikes in them, in military parlance, *trous-de-loups*.

This was in anticipation of an assault. The city has many fine buildings, and in it is the finest church I have ever seen. In it is a gigantic image of our Lord, as a negro, even to the woolly hair, and the candles burning around him are black. He is especially worshipped by the colored people. The castle of San Juan is strong and full of munitions of war, but provisions are very scarce everywhere. But, beautifully constructed as are both castle and city, they offend the nostrils at every turn. For the Mexicans, except in their persons and garments, are the filthiest people under the sun. Were Vera Cruz kept clean I am sure it would not suffer, as it does, from malignant fevers.

Plaza del Rio, April 16, 1847.—We marched from camp on the 8th, our division, the Second of Regulars, commanded by Gen. Twiggs, taking the lead. It was hot and dusty, and the troops suffered horribly, being marched too rapidly from the ignorance of the General as to what exertion men can make in a climate like this. Matters improved as we went on, and we arrived here on the afternoon of the 11th. On the 14th we again struck our tents at an early hour, but had only proceeded a few miles when we found ourselves in the presence of the enemy. His position being very strong, in the celebrated pass of the Sierra

Gorda, and our division being weak, it was found expedient to fall back. On the 15th Gen. Patterson with two brigades arrived, and, as he was too sick for duty, he transferred the command to Gen. Twiggs, who, without sufficient knowledge of the Mexicans' position of numbers, ordered that they should be attacked at midnight, by the Regulars on the right, the Volunteers on the left. But the moment this insane project, as Gen. Patterson conceived it, came to his knowledge he resumed command and suspended operations. On the 14th Gen. Scott and his staff reached this place, and since then active measures have been taken to discover everything possible as to the number and position of our enemy. It is said that Santa Anna is in command of 12,000 men, with a field train of 24 six or eight-pounders, and nine or twelve heavy pieces in position. Our force is by no means so formidable, but we have no fears as to the result of the impending battle, which possibly may occur to-morrow. I see Capt. Hardee very frequently. Like the rest of us, he is very anxious to return to his family. As we are on the eve of a battle, there is much bustle, but we have no fear.

Jalapa, May 29, 1847.—This letter is written on official paper, captured at Cerro Gordo in Santa Anna's carriage. This is quite a stylish affair, but of colossal dimensions. When General Scott left this place he presented me with all of Santa Anna's correspondence that had fallen into his hands, and among it was a quantity of fine letter paper. This is of English manufacture. Had we half the influence possessed by England in this country our difficulties with it would soon be over. Even now, overrun with robbers, as the whole coun-

try is, an English courier can travel anywhere with perfect safety; while ours, without immense risk, cannot pass over the best protected roads. Only a few days since Colonel Laurens, carrying despatches to General Scott, was killed on the other side of Plan del Rio. Murder on the road between this place and Vera Cruz is not uncommon, as it is infested by an organized body of 200 or 300 bandits. Colonel Laurens' companions, three or four in number, escaped. Somehow or other it happens that none of our generals can keep either his contemplated operations or the intentions of the Government from the knowledge of the enemy. The lost despatches, which are long ere this in Santa Anna's hands, were of much importance. Not, as I believe, that this matters much, for he is almost utterly helpless, and, though he has contrived to rally a small army around him, he can neither feed nor pay it. The Mexicans, too, are essentially cowards, and this is more true of the officers than of the men. The rank and file of the Mexican Army do not hesitate to speak of Ampudia and of other officers as cowards, and as being the first to run away in battle. Our troops, on the contrary, consider it their greatest boast if they can outstrip their officers in the race for glory. They are often heard to speak with the highest admiration of their gallantry and heroism, both individually and collectively.

The training at West Point has been of the utmost value in every department of the army, but it has excited much jealousy among the volunteers. I fear an effort may be made to abolish the Military Academy after the war. General Scott has always been its warm friend, and has upheld it with

all his influence. The day that he left us, as I was lamenting to him my sad fate at being left behind, he said to me: "But only think of me! I left Washington with a halter around my neck. I trusted to you and the other graduates to extricate me from my difficulties, and gloriously have you done it; nor shall the service ever be forgotten!" And yet here I am left in Jalapa, and I ardently desired to go with the main army to Mexico, which I now fear I shall not see.

San Angel, Sept. 6. 1847.—On July 27 our brigade marched from Puebla to relieve Gen. Pierce's command, of 2,500 men, as it was reported that he was surrounded by the Mexican troops. We marched some twenty miles to Ojo de Agua, where we remained till August 2, when we learned that our assistance was not needed. On the 4th we were again in Puebla, and on the 7th the army marched thence for Mexico, reaching Cordova on the 10th. That day Capt. Kearney, of the Dragoons, lost three of his men and seven horses, being captured by the Mexicans. The men were holding the horses of their companions, who were foraging for cattle. On the 11th we reached Agolla, and, hearing that the enemy was strongly posted at El Penol, a reconnoissance was made on the 12th and 13th. On the latter day Lieut. Hamilton, with a few dragoons, was attacked by a party of Mexican Lancers, and badly wounded, but, as usual, our troops, tho' very inferior in number, had the best of it. On the 19th we marched to the vicinity of San Jeronimo, where we came into the presence of the enemy, very favorably posted, having about 5,000 men and heaven knows how many artillery and cavalry. Even before we came within cannon range we were

fired upon with much vigor, but, our guns being of small calibre, we could do little mischief. Our losses were comparatively small. As we had moved up directly in front of the hostile batteries in the afternoon it was discovered that we were in a wrong position, so we moved to the right and left of the enemy. With immense difficulty we crossed a ravine, through which a considerable stream flows, and found a large body of our troops already assembled, but both before and behind us we had a large body of Mexicans, who, if they had had the courage to attack us, would have annihilated us. During part of the night we bivouacked in an orchard, surrounded by a high wall, a position we should never have abandoned, as it commanded the road to Mexico, and by that road most of the Mexican army retreated, under cover of a pouring rain. We marched at 2 a. m. on the 20th to join the force ordered to charge. We had to cross ravines and water-courses, pass over the most clayey soil I ever saw, in consistency like soft soap, and I cannot tell how often I fell, for the night was pitch dark. Through some mistake we were advanced too much to the right, so that we did not participate as largely in the fight as some of the other regiments, but we had an excellent opportunity to witness the whole of it, and a glorious sight it was. The forces were about equal in number, without counting the enemy's horse and artillery, and, wonderful to relate, in about seventeen minutes we put him to the most disgraceful flight, killing great numbers and capturing more prisoners than it was easy to know what to do with. Our loss was but small. We captured 22 guns, some of large calibre. The place where the

battle was fought is called Contreras, by which name, I suppose, it will be known in history.

As soon as the hurry of the battle and the cheerings of victory were over our march was continued towards San Pablo, or Churubusco, where it was known that a large force of Mexicans was prepared to receive us. As soon as our reconnoitering officers approached the place the most infernal fire was opened upon them, and the Rifles were sent to support them. The violent firing continuing, the First Artillery was sent to support them, and to aid in taking the place. We were, however, by, I fear, the ignorance of our engineers, sent immediately in front of the battery, and lost two of our most valuable officers, Capts. Capron and Burke, with Lieut Hoffman. Finally, additional forces were sent to our aid, and the place was carried, but with heavy loss to us. We captured 1,200 prisoners, 27 guns and a large amount of ammunition. Had I not been ashamed, I could have wept like a child when I saw the dead bodies of the officers mentioned. Capt. Capron was shot through the lungs, and his last request was "that he might receive a decent funeral," which to the utmost of our abilities was granted him and his unfortunate companions. Our regiment has suffered severely. In consequence of the battles of Contreras and Churubusco came the Armistice of August 22, and negotiations for peace.

City of Mexico, September 22, 1847.  
—On the 7th of September the truce was broken, and hostilities resumed, as was expected. The enemy had been violating it notoriously from the very beginning, and Santa Anna had refused to sign the treaty agreed upon by the commissioners. On the 8th

was fought the bloody battle of Molino del Rey. This conflict was brought on by Gen. Worth's division being sent to destroy a foundry near Chapultepec, but by some mistake it went to the former place, where the enemy was in large force. A very fierce action ensued, in which, as a matter of course, we were successful. We captured vast quantities of ammunition and a battery of six guns. Our loss, however, was very severe, having over 700 killed and wounded. We lost an unusual number of officers. In this engagement Capt. Kirby Smith\* was badly wounded in the head, and is since dead. On the 11th we marched to San Cosme, near the enemy's lines, and on the 12th were under arms all day, as our batteries of heavy guns had opened on Chapultepec.

On the 13th, early in the morning, we marched to Chapultepec and participated in the glorious action which terminated in the fall of that celebrated fortress. After the battle we pursued the foe on the Tacubaya road, with six regiments, and did not halt until we had reached the Garita de Bilen, about three hundred yards from the citadel, a most formidable fortification, containing every imaginable instrument used for destruction in war. It is almost in the city. Its fire was so destructive that we were compelled to halt and erect batteries, which we did during the night, and which, fortunately, we did not use, as very early in the morning some citi-

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\*Captain Ephraim Kirby Smith was appointed from Florida. He was the son of Judge Smith. His mother was a Miss Kirby. He was the father of Mrs. Emma Jerome Blackwood, so well known in Lancaster, whose mother in later years married Gen. Eaton. A younger brother, Edmund Kirby, served in the Confederate forces, attaining the rank of General. He later on hyphenated his name, and called himself Kirby-Smith.

zens came out with a white flag, to inform us that the Mexican troops had abandoned the city.

From Chapultepec to the Garita we had three batteries to storm, and our loss in consequence was very severe. At the last battery, among others, we lost two of the most gallant spirits I ever knew, Captain Drum and Lieutenant Benjamin, both of the Fourth Artillery. During the day Lieutenant Brannan was wounded severely, but not dangerously. Major Dimick was wounded slightly in the side by a musket ball, and a similar missile took away a very small portion of my left ear, close enough, God knows, and I feel very grateful it was no worse. I have been very lucky, so far, when the imminent perils to which I have been exposed are considered.

Early in the morning of the 14th we marched into the City of Mexico, and at night I slept in the National Palace, or, as you in the United States say, the "halls of the Montezumas." Up to the 16th the common people fired upon us a good deal from the tops of houses and the corners of streets, and this they did not cease until we had killed many of them. Many of our men have been assassinated, and no one, unless intoxicated or insane, would think of going through the streets of the city at night, if he belongs to our army. Those who harass us in this way are called "lepers," or "blanket men." They are a vile set, and are much dreaded by the better classes. They seem to be nothing but robbers and assassins, and are said to number at least 30,000.

On the morning of the 13th the Acordada, a large prison, was thrown open, and upwards of 2,000 criminals of all kinds were let loose on the community to annoy us. How horrid and

short-sighted! It is not to us that essential injury will be done by these wretches, but to the Mexicans themselves. Did ever a sane government do such a thing?

The foreigners in the city have received us with great kindness and attention. They seem to have been much persecuted, and hence sympathize with our successes and are grateful for our protection.

In our late battles we captured many of the deserters from our ranks. They have suffered death, as they richly deserved, as they fought most desperately against us. On the 10th sixteen of them were hanged at San Angel, and thirty on the 13th at Tacubaya, under the superintendence of Col. Harney. He took them out to the place of execution and said to them, "As soon as our troops plant our flag on Chapultepec you will be launched into eternity." When it was run up he said: "Now take your last look at your country's flag," and they were swung off.

In the fight from Chapultepec to the City of Mexico only one man in my company was killed and three slightly wounded. Lieutenant Haskin, one of the storming party, had his arm dreadfully shattered by a musket ball. Immediate amputation was performed, the arm being taken off at the socket. He is doing well, and manifests a cheerful and contented spirit that is remarkable.

For the present we are stationed on the citadel, a very dirty place, with miserable accommodations, and abounding in fleas. As yet there is but little prospect of peace, for the Mexican Congress at Queretaro cannot muster a quorum, although it has been in session since the 5th of October. The government has no money and

scarcely any troops, but there is no talk of peace. In short our Congress will have to settle the affairs of this distracted country.

It seems odd enough that about 8,000 of us should be able to control this city of 150,000 people, who earnestly desire our extermination. We have succeeded in nearly curing the wretches of the crime of assassination by the use of a little rigor, as the culprits find that if they fall into our hands there is no escape. Murder, and, indeed, nearly all other crimes, are so common in this country as to make it utterly loathsome and detestable.

From the City of Mexico the writer of these letters was sent to Vera Cruz, where he remained until the close of the war, in command of the castle of San Juan de Ulloa.

Apropos of the Mexican War, the following verses from a song that was popular during that period are recalled:

"Here's a health to General Taylor,  
whose "rough and ready" blow  
Struck terror to the rancheros of brag-  
gart Mexico;  
May his country ne'er forget his deeds,  
and ne'er forget to show,  
She hold's him worthy of a place at  
Benny Haven's, oh!

\* \* \* \* \*

"To the "veni, vidi, vici man, to Scott,  
the great hero,  
Fill up the goblet to the brim, let no  
one shrinking go;  
May life's cares on his honored head  
fall light as flakes of snow,  
And his fair fame be ever great at  
Benny Haven's, oh!"

## Minutes of the March Meeting.

Lancaster, Pa., March 6, 1908.

The Lancaster County Historical Society held its regular monthly meeting this evening in the Society's room, in the A. Herr Smith Library building, there being a good attendance of members, despite the inclement weather.

President Steinman presided, and a majority of the officers were in attendance.

The following persons were elected to membership: Miss Mary Dougherty, L. E. Bair and John L. Summy, of Lancaster, and Webster L. Hershey, of Landisville.

Librarian Sener announced the following donations received by the Society since the last meeting:

Mitchell's Compendium of Canals and Railroads, 1835; Thanksgiving sermon by Rev. J. Chambers, Philadelphia, 1859; eleven Catholic pamphlets; History of the Columbia Fire Engine Company; Public Ledger Almanacs, 1870-5; The Centaur not Fabulous, 1806; Catholic Records, Volumes 4, 2, 3, 7, 8 and 9, volumes 7 and 8 not being complete; large scrap book, containing newspaper clippings, portraits, maps and autographs, referable to Columbia; tin box, containing the original minute book, bills, receipts, etc., of the Sanitary Committee of Columbia during the cholera epidemic of 1854; several letters of Simon Cameron; letter of Thaddeus Stevens (framed); \$50 bill of Lancaster Bank (framed); nine bundles of letters referring to banquets held by the Society of Old Columbians; besides a num-

ber of bills, receipts, photographs, old newspapers, etc., all donated by Mr. F. X. Reuss, of Philadelphia, formerly of Columbia, who, outside of Samuel Evans, Esq., has done more for the preservation of Columbia history than any other man; a piece of music, entitled, "Nobody's Song," dedicated to the Lancaster County Teachers' Institute in 1870, donated by John Baer Stoudt; History of the One Hundred and Twenty-fourth Pennsylvania Volunteer Regiment, from the Pennsylvania State Library; six numbers of the publications of the Deutschen Pioneer Verein, of Philadelphia, from Mr. Carl F. Huck, the secretary; number of book sale catalogues and several exchanges for February and March; also, Carpenter Family Genealogy (purchased).

The donations of Mr. Francis X. Reuss, of Philadelphia, are particularly valuable, especially the old scrap book containing newspaper clippings of early occurrences in Columbia. The thanks of the Society were extended to the donors.

Mr. Charles T. Steigerwalt exhibited to the members an old Lancaster weekly publication, the existence of which was heretofore unknown. It is called "The Hive" and was the successor of "The Hive" published here from 1803 to 1805, an interesting account of which, prepared by Judge Charles I. Landis, was read before the last meeting of the Society. The publication is octavo in size and it was issued by William Hamilton, as editor, he using the nom de plume of "William Honeycomb." It was at first printed by William Greer, but Mr. Hamilton later became both editor and printer. Like the early newspaper efforts, it had but a brief existence. The first issue appeared May 19, 1810, and it sur-

vived until September 10 of the same year. Mr. Steigerwalt secured the paper at a recent sale held in Baltimore.

Mr. William Riddle called the attention of the Society to a paper read before the Teachers' Science club at a meeting held at Marietta by Simon Cameron, on the early history of Marietta. As the paper was of great historical value Mr. Riddle suggested that Mr. Cameron be invited to read it before the Society. The matter was referred to the Executive Committee.

The paper of the evening was by Mrs. Mary N. Robinson, who took as her subject, "A Lancastrian in the Mexican War." It embraced a series of very entertaining letters written by the father of the essayist, Col. George Nauman, and who served through that war. The letters graphically described the different battles of the conflict and the fact that a Lancastrian participated in all the leading engagements gave them added interest.

Mrs. Robinson was tendered the thanks of the Society for her paper, which was ordered to be published in the pamphlet. Several interesting war reminiscences were recalled by members following the reading of the paper.

Dr. Dubbs announced that the annual meeting of the Pennsylvania German Society will be held in this city next fall, the sessions to be held at Franklin and Marshall College.

The Society then adjourned.



